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DEMOCRATS SUPPORT PROTECTION OF CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER

TALLAHASSEE --- Florida House Democrats today voted in support of an amendment sponsored by Representative Martin Kiar (D-Davie) that would have restricted bids and prohibited the issuance of permits to drill in an area five miles north and five miles south of the Caloosahatchee River.

The Caloosahatchee River enters the Gulf of Mexico 10 miles southwest of Fort Myers, near Sanibel Island. It is an important link in the inland waterway system of South Florida and is integral in efforts to restore and preserve the Everglades.

On a voice vote, House Republicans defeated the amendment to a bill, HB1219, that allows oil drilling within three miles of Florida's coastline.

"I filed this amendment because the river, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades are all connected," Representative Kiar said. "If drilling occurs in the area of the ocean that my amendment was trying to exempt, and a spill occurs, we are risking devastating the Everglades, our drinking water and severely harming the wildlife and ecosystem of the Everglades."

"I am saddened to see this amendment defeated," Kiar said. "As I said on the floor of the House, a vote against this amendment could potentially lead to the destruction of Florida's most valuable lifeline, its most unique treasure, the Everglades."

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